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## **World TB Day with Dr. Rosemary Odeke March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Presenter:** Each year, 9 million people worldwide fall ill to tuberculosis, but 3 million of them fail to receive treatment. Here in Uganda, there are 60,000 TB patients. On March 24<sup>th</sup>, Uganda celebrates World Tuberculosis Day with the theme, "Reach the Sixty Thousand." To help us learn more about TB prevention, testing, and treatment, we are joined by Dr. Rosemary Odeke, a tuberculosis specialist with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Odeke, thank you for speaking with us today. Dr. Odeke, what are the risk factors for contracting TB, and how can we prevent infection?

**Dr. Rosemary Odeke:** The main risk factor of contracting TB is having contact with somebody who has TB that has not been diagnosed, and this person has not been started on TB treatment. So if in your family you have somebody who has been coughing for a long time, for three weeks or more, and is losing weight, having fevers and night sweats, this person is likely to probably have TB. So he should go to the health facility to be tested for TB. And members of your family, too, should go and be tested, especially the young children below five years of age. Because somebody in your home is continuously with you, so the risk of being affected with very close contact, that prolonged, is high.

**Presenter:** So what can a patient expect when they are going to be tested for TB?

**Dr. Rosemary Odeke:** The patient should expect that they will be required to cough into a container. Cough, and you will clear your throat and try to produce whatever is in your lungs and put it into that container. That container will then be taken to the laboratory for testing to see whether you have the TB germ or not. And if the TB germ is found in whatever you have coughed, you will be started on TB treatment as soon as possible. This is so that you can protect your family from contracting the disease from you by taking your drugs. And you should expect that treatment will be free of charge from this health facility, and that you can be cured from tuberculosis. You should also expect to be tested for HIV, so you can get help to protect yourself from reduced immunity, which will worsen your TB.

**Presenter:** After you have gone through the testing, what is the treatment for TB?

**Dr. Rosemary Odeke:** The treatment for TB is treatment for six to eight months with a combination of pills, different drugs. These drugs are given in two phases. In the first phase, you will get four drugs. Most of the TB drugs are combined into one pill, so most of the patients will take three tablets every day for the duration of the treatment, for the two months for the intensive phase.

For the next phase, which is the continuation phase, the patients normally take two drugs. And these two drugs are also combined, and the patient will be expected to take two pills per day for the duration of treatment. So the intensive phase is two months, and the continuation phase is four months.

**Presenter:** Do patients expect to be tested at the end of that period?

**Dr. Rosemary Odeke:** After the first two months of treatment, the patient is expected to be tested again for TB, so you are required to give another sample from your cough. And if this is found to be not having the germs, you will be treated through the continuation phase of treatment.

And it is important that you take your medicines every day. This will protect your family from getting infected, as well as preventing you from getting worse, or getting the disease again.

**Presenter:** Thank you, Dr. Odeke, and remember, you too out there can test for TB from the major health units around you. Together, we can reach the sixty thousand.